WHITE CHEMICAL CORPORATION

NEW JERSEY

EPA ID# NJD980755623

EPA REGION 2
CONGRESSIONAL DIST. 10
Essex County

Site Description

The White Chemical Corporation site is a 4.4-acre, inactive facility that formerly manufactured acid chlorides and flame retardant compounds. The site is located in a heavily populated and industrialized area of Newark, Essex County, New Jersey. The site consists of five major buildings and three smaller, facility support buildings. White Chemical Corporation (WCC) operated the facility from 1983 until July 1990 when it ceased most operations. During its operational years, WCC was issued numerous violations of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP). Initially, EPA found over 10,000 55-gallon drums and other containers of hazardous substances precariously stacked or in other ways improperly stored throughout the site. Drums and other containers were found in various stages of deterioration, fuming or leaking their contents onto the soil. Other containers found on the site included 150 gas cylinders; 126 storage tanks, vats, and process reactors; hundreds of fiberpack drums; glass and plastic bottles; carboys; and boxes. In addition, an on-site laboratory was found to contain approximately 12,000 laboratory-size containers haphazardly stored on structurally unsound shelving, or stacked in piles on the floor.

Site Responsibility:

This site is being addressed through Federal and State actions.

NPL LISTING HISTORY
Proposed Date: 5/9/91
Final Date: 9/25/91

Threats and Contaminants

Approximately 12,000 people are estimated to live and work within a one-quarter mile radius of the site. Potentially exposed populations included nearby residents, workers, trespassers, fire-fighting personnel and railway commuters. The predominant route of exposure was deemed inhalation for all of the exposed populations, and direct contact for trespassers or fire-fighting personnel. Initial site conditions could have resulted in a catastrophic chemical release, most likely consisting of a plume with hazardous

concentrations of acid gases and toxic substances, posing a threat to residents, workers, and commuters in the area. Now that all chemicals in containers have been removed, the remaining site contamination is a potential threat to on-site construction workers and trespassers.

Cleanup Approach

The site is being addressed in three stages: an immediate action, an early remedial response and a long-term remedial response phase focusing on the cleanup of the entire site.

Response Action Status

Immediate/Emergency Action: A removal action to stabilize the site was initiated by NJDEP on May 15, 1990, under the New Jersey Spill Compensation and Control Act. However, in August 1990, after removing 1,000 drums, NJDEP requested that EPA take over the removal action at the site. EPA initiated its removal action in October 1990 and completed it in October 1992.

Early Remedial Response (Surface Contamination): EPA signed a Record of Decision (ROD) on September 26, 1991 for the remedy of surface contamination, which included: tanks; drums; vats; laboratory-size containers and other vessels. Implementation of the remedy began on September 27, 1991. On May 11, 1992, three Potentially Responsible Parties complied with a Unilateral Administrative Order to perform certain elements of the surface contamination cleanup. On November 9, 1992, the Respondents mobilized on-site to conduct the remaining activities relating to the surface contamination cleanup. On April 3, 1993 the Respondents completed all cleanup activities for the surface contamination.

Site-Wide Long Term Remedial Response: EPA is in the process of conducting a Remedial Investigation (RI) and a Feasibility Study (FS) at the site for any remaining contaminated media (e.g., ground water, surface water, soil, and buildings). Although significant remedial investigation work has been performed, additional information regarding the groundwater is needed to complete the investigation. The data obtained during the site investigation will be the basis of the RI/FS reports. The FS will identify potential remedies. Finally, a Record of Decision will document the remedy selected for any remaining contamination on the site. In September 2000, EPA provided the City of Newark a redevelopment grant to identify potential users of the property after remediation is complete.

Site Facts: In 1999, the EPA and the former site owner, AZS Corporation, together with four corporate affiliates, entered into a Consent Decree. This settlement recovers costs incurred and expected to be incurred to remediate the on-site contamination.

Environmental Progress 

All cleanup activities associated with surface contamination have been completed. This included 7,787 drums of hazardous substances, 4,497 empty drums, contents of 191 tanks and vessels, 58 gas cylinders and 14,806 laboratory containers. In addition, all process piping associated with the process tanks (approximately 2,600 linear feet of metal piping, 590 linear feet of glass piping and 750 linear feet of polyvinyl chloride (PVC)) were flushed and decontaminated.